UNITED NATIONS

# Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1854
20 March 1995

## MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Bosnian Government forces launch major offensive north-east of Tuzla; Bosnian Serbs shell town in retaliation; Special Representative Akashi says Bosnia and Herzegovina cease-fire is disintegrating.

+ Special Representative Khan expresses shock at death of 24 prisoners by asphyxiation in Kigali police cell; calls on Government to improve conditions in Rwanda's prisons.

+ Fourth World Conference on Women must achieve permanent transformations in policies, attitudes and behaviour, Secretary-General tells Advisory Group.

+ Member States owe United Nations $2.9 billion as of 15 March; $1.2 billion owed to regular budget and $1.7 billion to peace-keeping.

+ UNICEF Executive Board to consider programme recommendations for 30 countries at second regular session.

+ Acting Chairman says Preparatory Committee for United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary must soon conclude organization of list of speakers for General Assembly Commemorative Meeting.

* * *

Bosnian Government forces this morning launched an offensive north-east of Tuzla involving up to 2,000 soldiers, according to a United Nations spokesman. He described it as the most serious breach of the Bosnian cease-fire to date. In retaliation, Bosnian Serb forces shelled Tuzla and its airbase, hitting a Government barracks and causing some 50 casualties there.

The spokesman said Special Representative Yasushi Akashi had met today with Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic, at Mr. Ganic's request. The Special Representative took the opportunity to discuss what he viewed as the disintegrating cease-fire in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Meanwhile in Croatia, a United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) patrol yesterday came under fire from Croatian Army positions in Sector South. One Canadian peace-keeper was wounded in the incident. The UNPROFOR patrol had been on its way to inspect a new observation post following Croatian troop movements in the area.

* * *

The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Rwanda, Shahryar Khan, has expressed shock and concern at the death by asphyxiation of 24 prisoners in a police cell in Kigali yesterday. He deplored the inhuman conditions to which they had been subjected, and called on the Government of Rwanda to alleviate the suffering of over 24,000 inmates in the country's overcrowded prisons. He also assured the Government that the United Nations would provide immediate assistance for the improvement of conditions in the prisons, and for the revival of the judicial process in Rwanda.

Special Representative Khan noted that the officials concerned in the tragedy had been arrested for criminal negligence, and that the Government had given assurances that such an incident would not be repeated. He urged the Government and people of Rwanda to continue to ensure complete transparency in the judicial process and to allow for due process of law to be established.

In a separate development, the Government has apologized for recent radio broadcasts which were hostile to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). It also pledged that there would be no more of those broadcasts.

* * *

The Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September, must achieve permanent transformations in policies, attitudes and behaviour, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In remarks to the Advisory Group on the Conference at Headquarters today, he said that would require not just agreement on the draft platform, but a lasting commitment to its strategic vision.

The Secretary-General stressed that the other global conferences organized by the United Nations also produced gains for women. All of the great global concerns -- the environment, human rights, population, social development -- directly affected their situation. The conceptual and political gains made at each conference must be integrated in coherent plans of action.

* * *

As of 15 March, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.9 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $1.2 billion was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.7 billion was for peace-keeping operations.

(more)

The United States -- the largest debtor -- owed $527 million to the regular budget, and $514 million to peace-keeping. The Russian Federation owed $63 million to the regular budget and $554 million to peace-keeping.

* * *

The Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) today began its second regular session of 1995 at Headquarters. During the four-day session, it will consider programme recommendations for some 30 countries, with expenditures totaling $507 million in general resources and $776 million in supplementary funds.

The Executive Board will also discuss a wide range of topics, from follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to the initial response to the recommendations of the recent management review of UNICEF.

* * *

The Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations has been continuing its consideration of the list of speakers for the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly, which will be held from 22 to 24 October 1995. Acting Committee Chairman Fredrik Wilhelm Breitenstein said on Friday that organization of the list must be concluded as soon as possible.

According to the Acting Chairman, there were three options to be considered. Under the first option, a Member State would be drawn from among the entire General Assembly membership, and the list would continue alphabetically, as in the case of General Assembly seating. The second option would have Members draw lots for the numbers 1 through 6 -- the numbers referring to the six meetings of the session -- which would designate the meeting at which the State would speak. The final option would involve a first-come, first-served basis, where Member States could line up to submit in writing their preferred choices for dates and position.

* *** *